SHANDA FANTASY ARTS

Carole Curtis

Katmandu

18

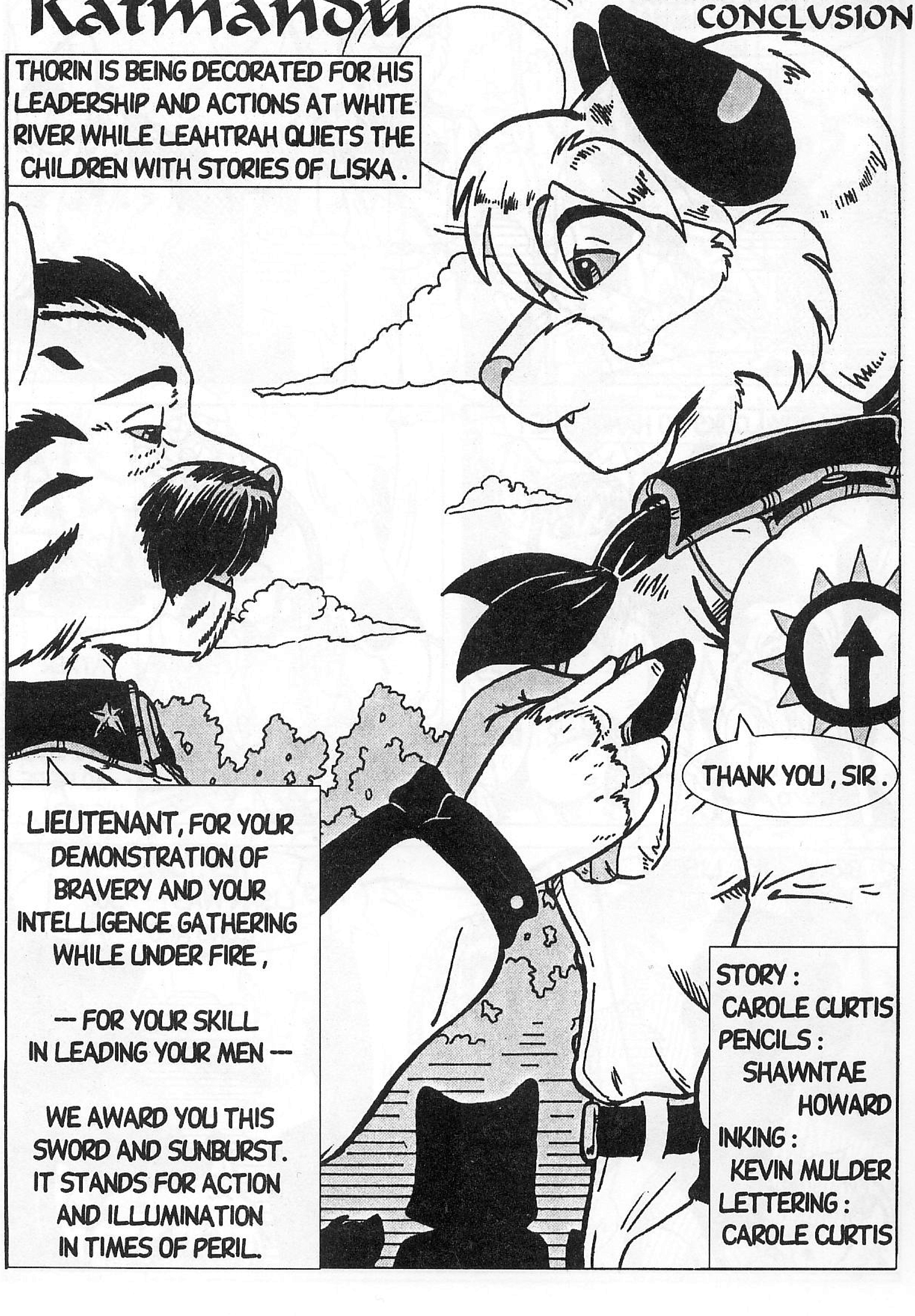
OCT 1999

$2.95

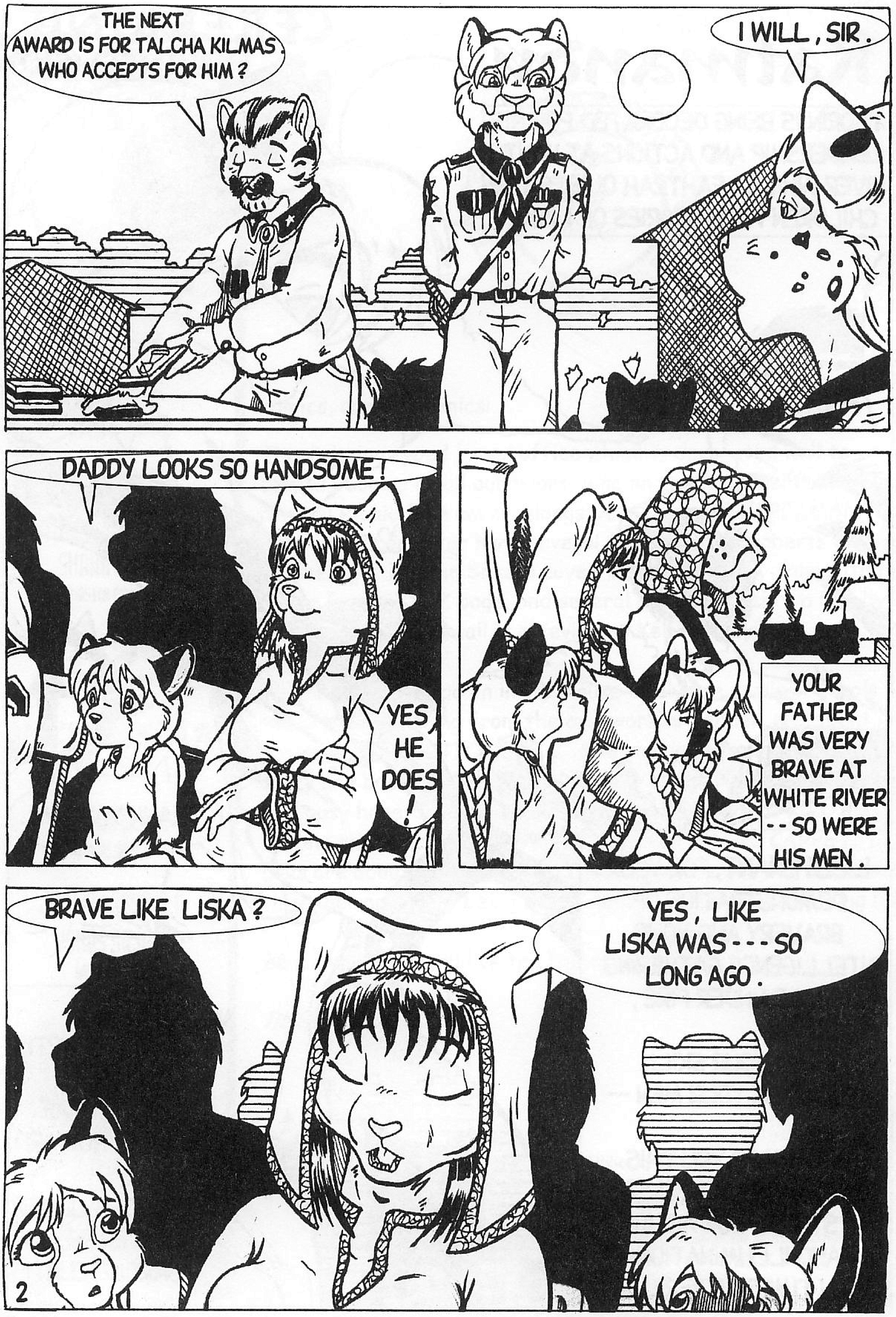
MATURE READERS

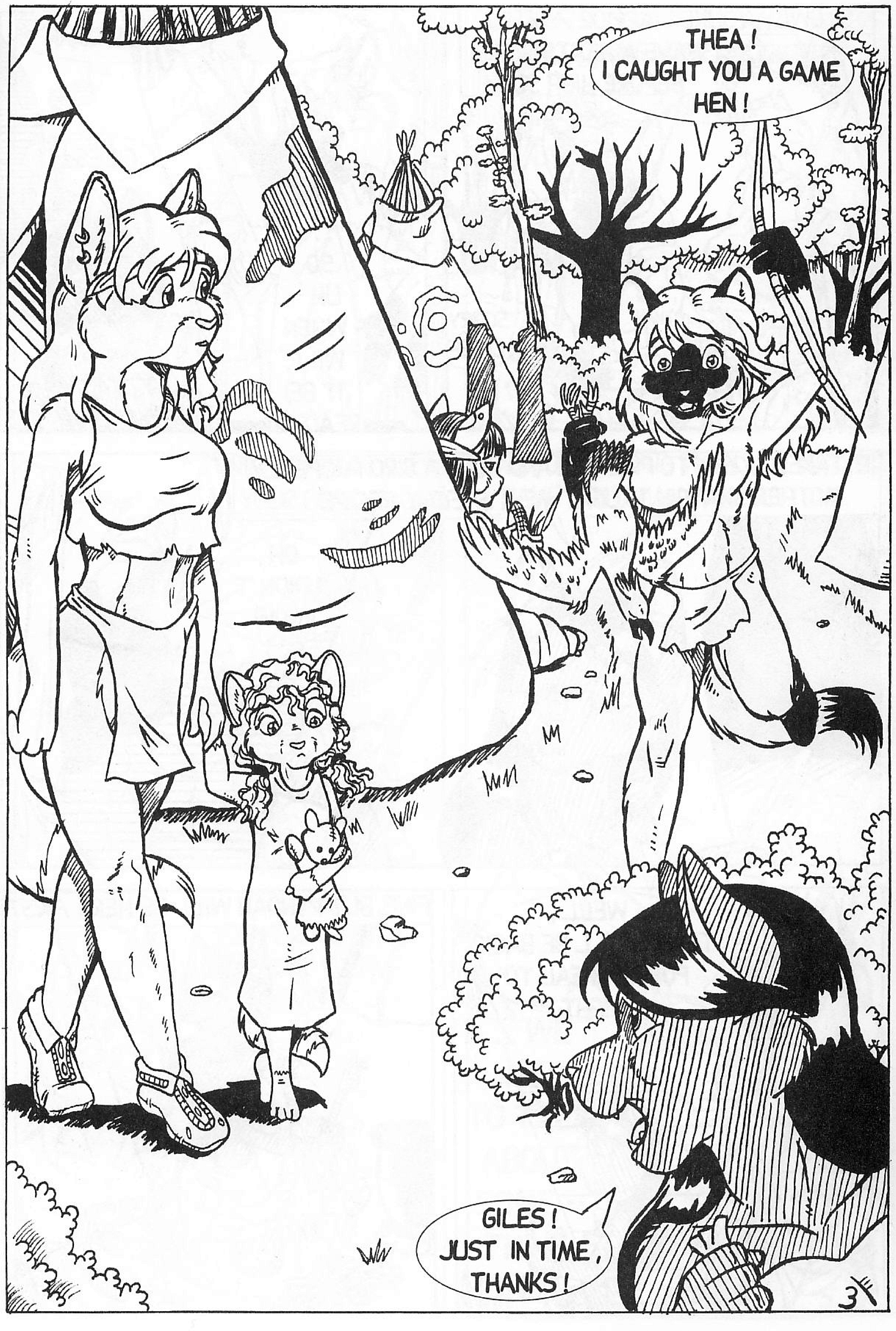
Katmandu

CEREMONIES
CONCLUSION

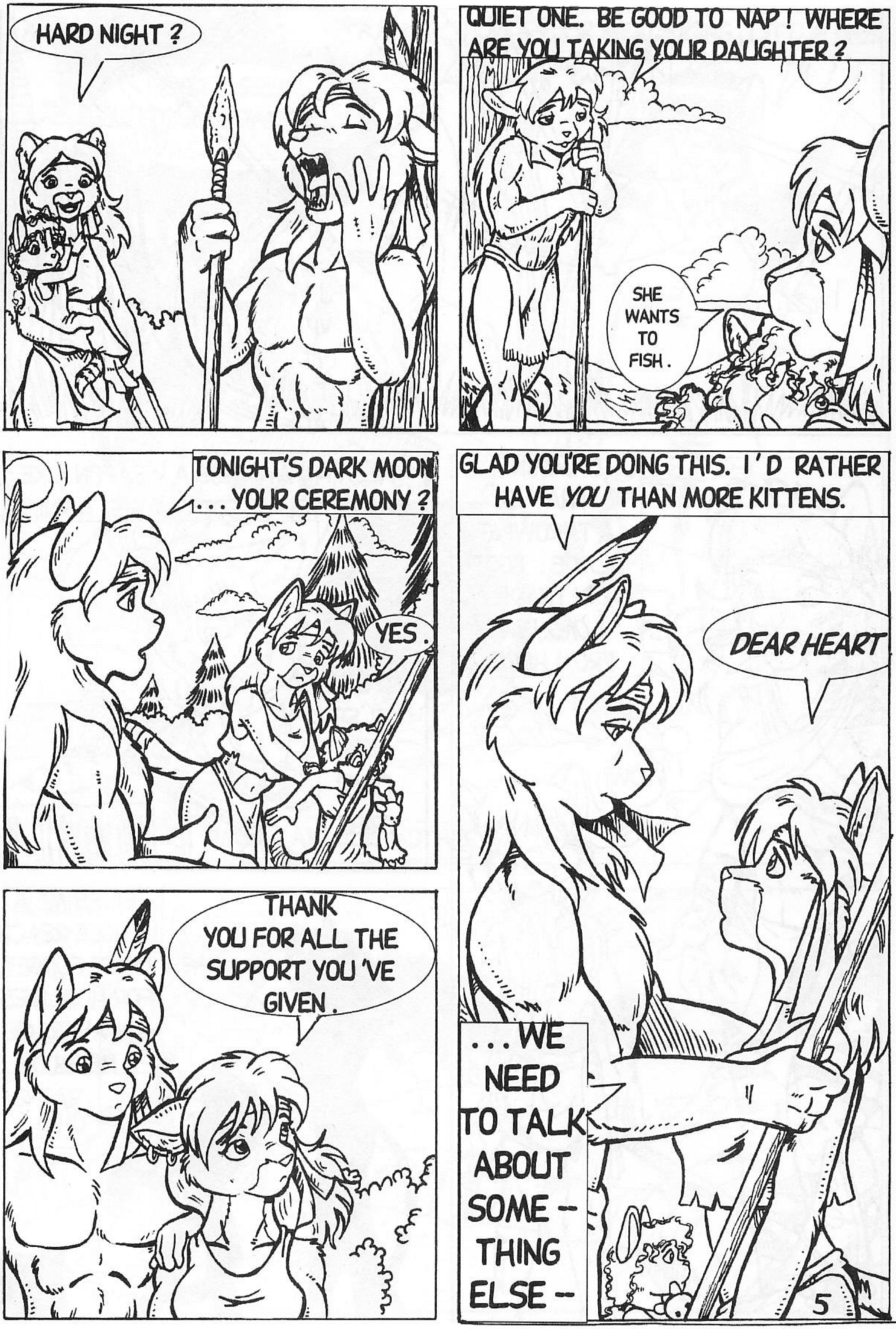

THORIN IS BEING DECORATED FOR HIS LEADERSHIP AND ACTIONS AT WHITE RIVER WHILE LEAHTRAH QUIETS THE CHILDREN WITH STORIES OF LISKA.
LIEUTENANT, FOR YOUR DEMONSTRATION OF BRAVERY AND YOUR INTELLIGENCE GATHERING WHILE UNDER FIRE,
— FOR YOUR SKILL IN LEADING YOUR MEN —
WE AWARD YOU THIS SWORD AND SUNBURST. IT STANDS FOR ACTION AND ILLUMINATION IN TIMES OF PERIL.
THANK YOU, SIR.

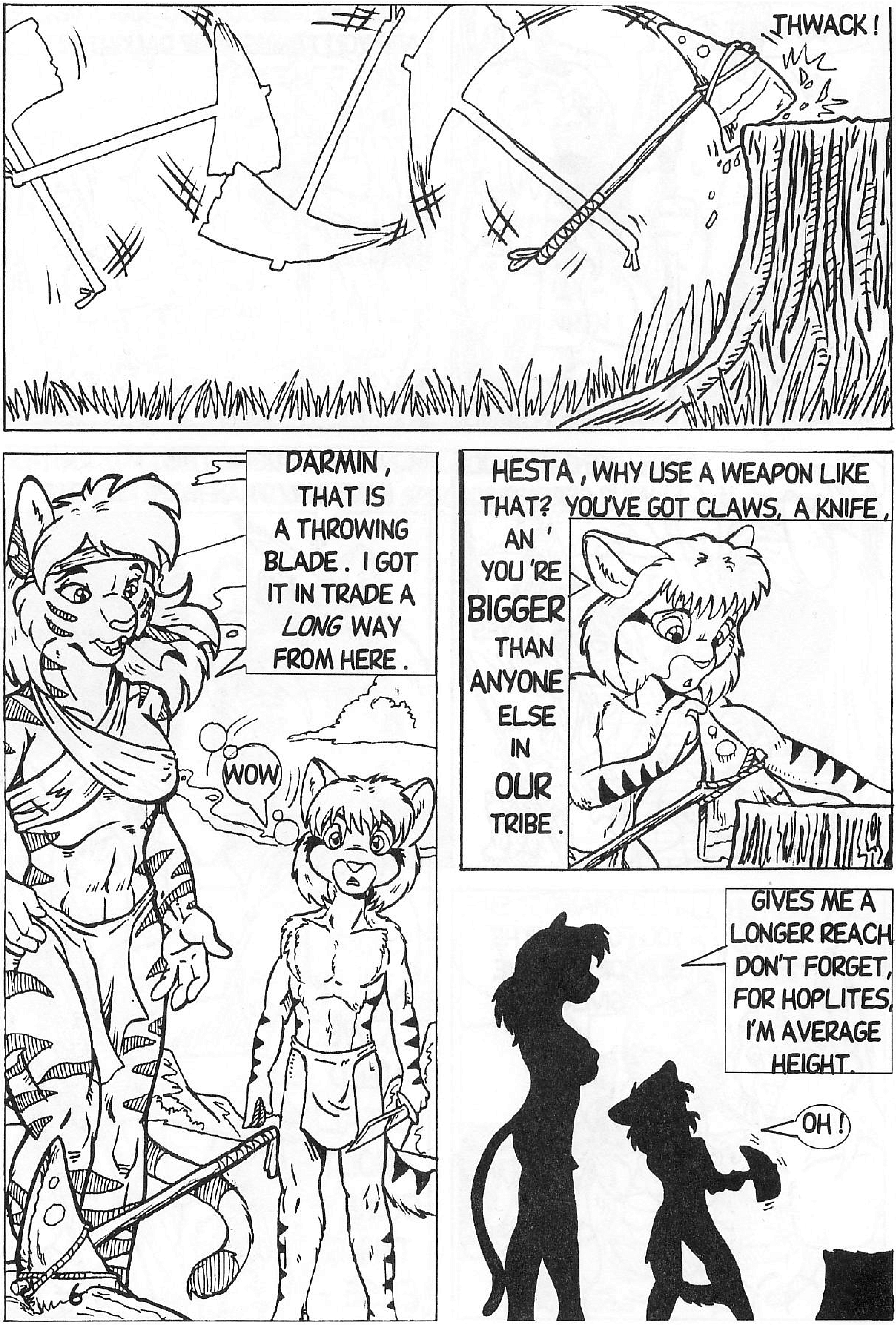
STORY:
CAROLE CURTIS
PENCILS:
SHAWNTAE HOWARD
INKING:
KEVIN MULDER
LETTERING:
CAROLE CURTIS

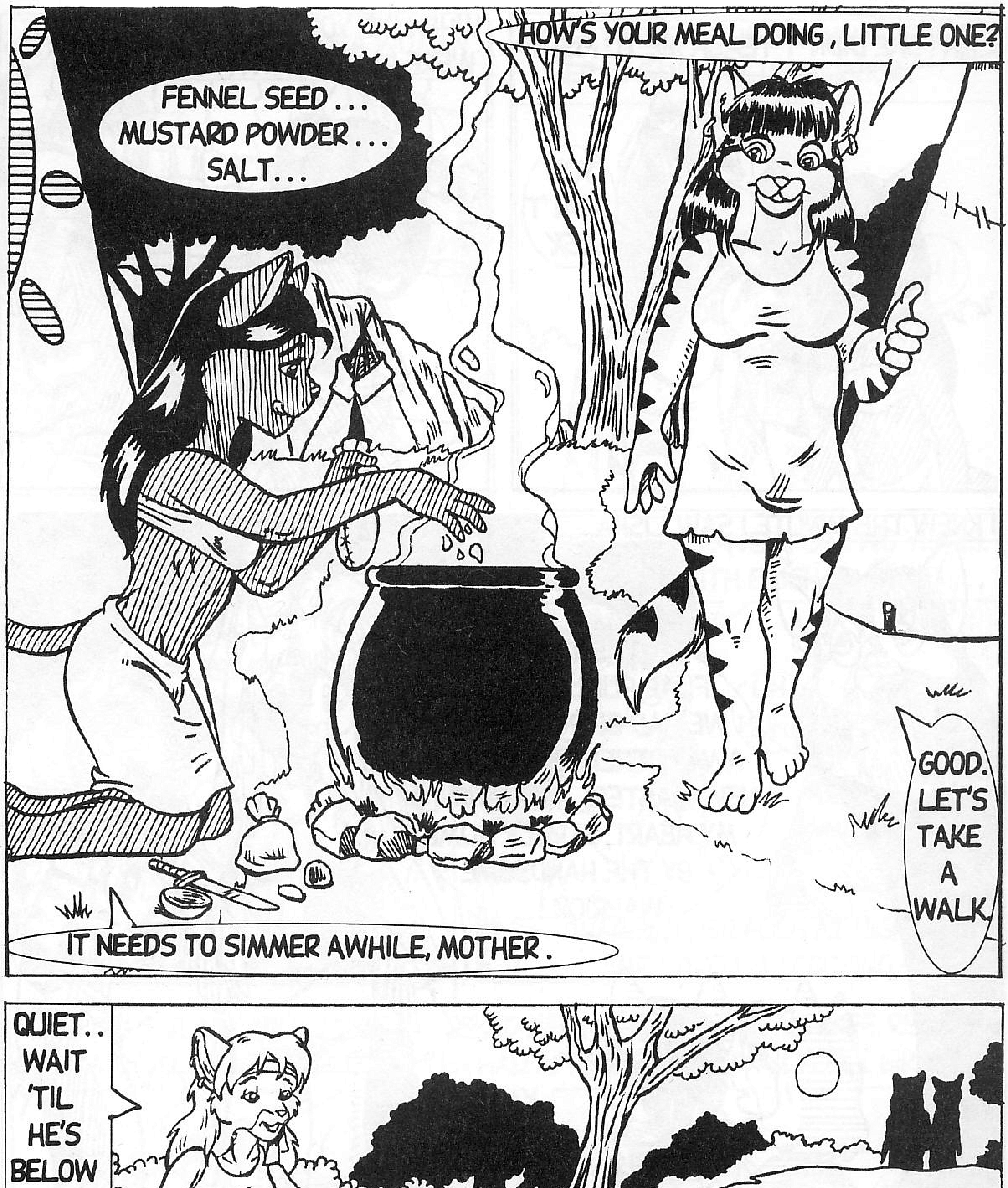

THE NEXT AWARD IS FOR TALCHA KILMAS WHO ACCEPTS FOR HIM ?
I WILL , SIR .
DADDY LOOKS SO HANDSOME !
YES, HE DOES !
YOUR FATHER WAS VERY BRAVE AT WHITE RIVER -- SO WERE HIS MEN .
BRAVE LIKE LISKA ?
YES , LIKE LISKA WAS --- SO LONG AGO .


THEA !
I CAUGHT YOU A GAME
HEN !
GILES !
JUST IN TIME,
THANKS !

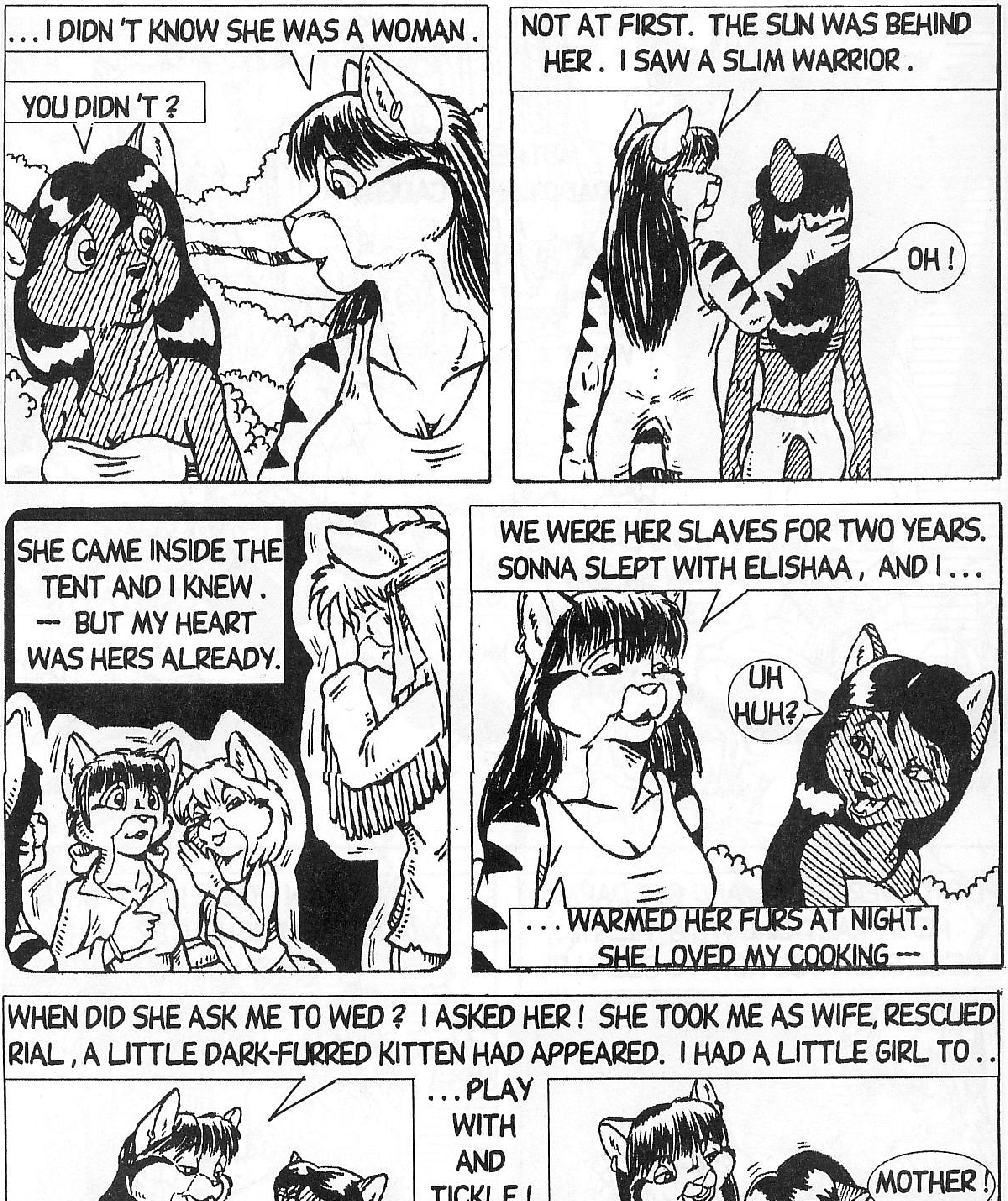
SLOWLY, YOUNG WARRIOR. YOU'LL HAVE A HEATSTROKE BEFORE HIGH SUN!
SORRY CHIEF
GILES!!!
... SO, UH - WHEN WILL IT BE READY?
IT TAKES *HOURS* TO PREPARE AND COOK A BIRD PROPERLY. MOTHER SHAYGIN TAUGHT ME A *SPECIAL* RECIPE.
OH, I DIDN'T KNOW.
WELL, THEN... I'LL BE BACK FOR MY MEAL TO-NIGHT.
FINE, BUT PYNDAN WILL BE HERE *FIRST*.

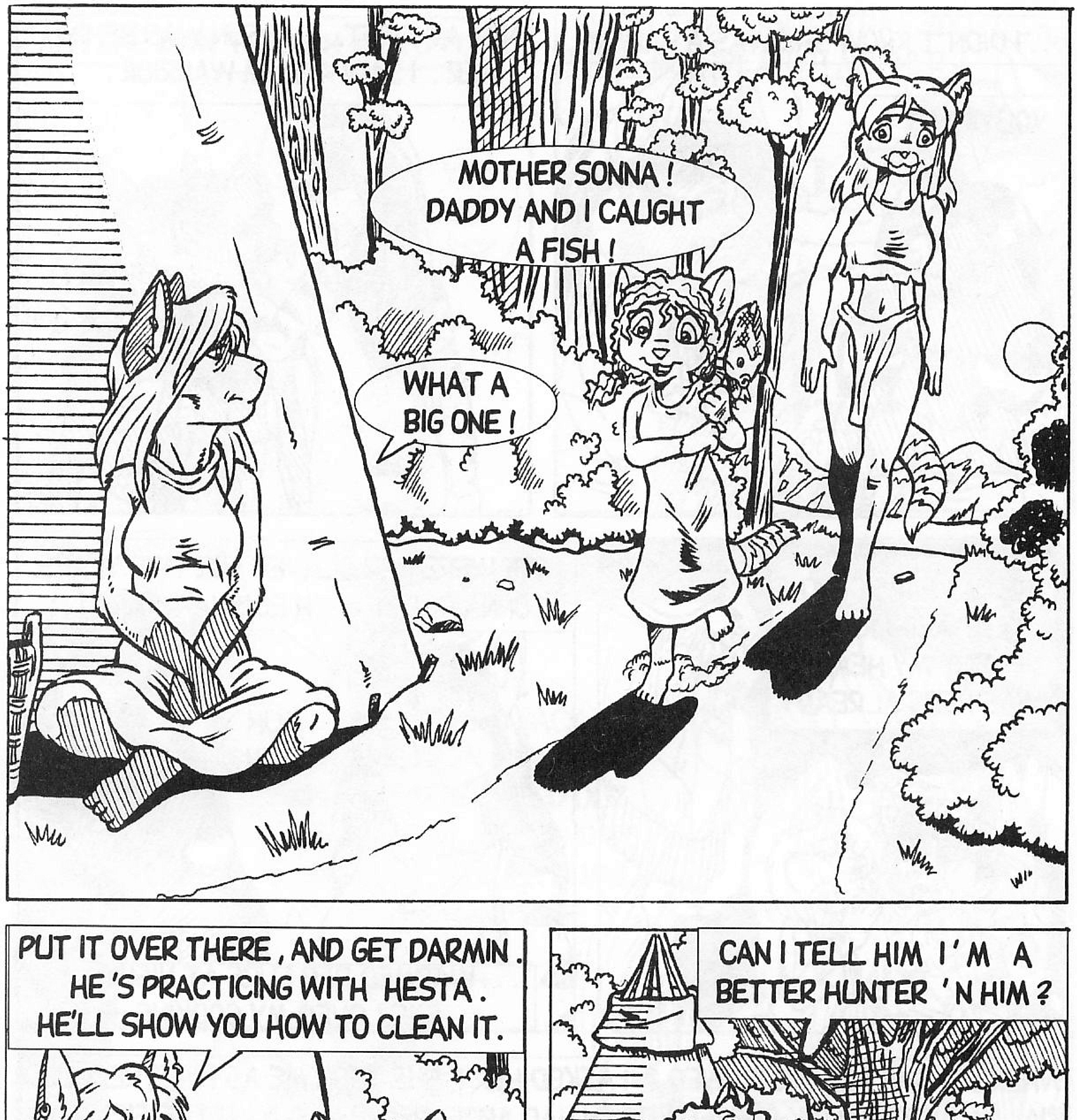

HARD NIGHT ?
QUIET ONE. BE GOOD TO NAP! WHERE ARE YOU TAKING YOUR DAUGHTER ?
SHE WANTS TO FISH.
TONIGHT'S DARK MOON ... YOUR CEREMONY ?
YES.
THANK YOU FOR ALL THE SUPPORT YOU'VE GIVEN.
GLAD YOU'RE DOING THIS. I'D RATHER HAVE *YOU* THAN MORE KITTENS.
DEAR HEART
...WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT SOME-THING ELSE--

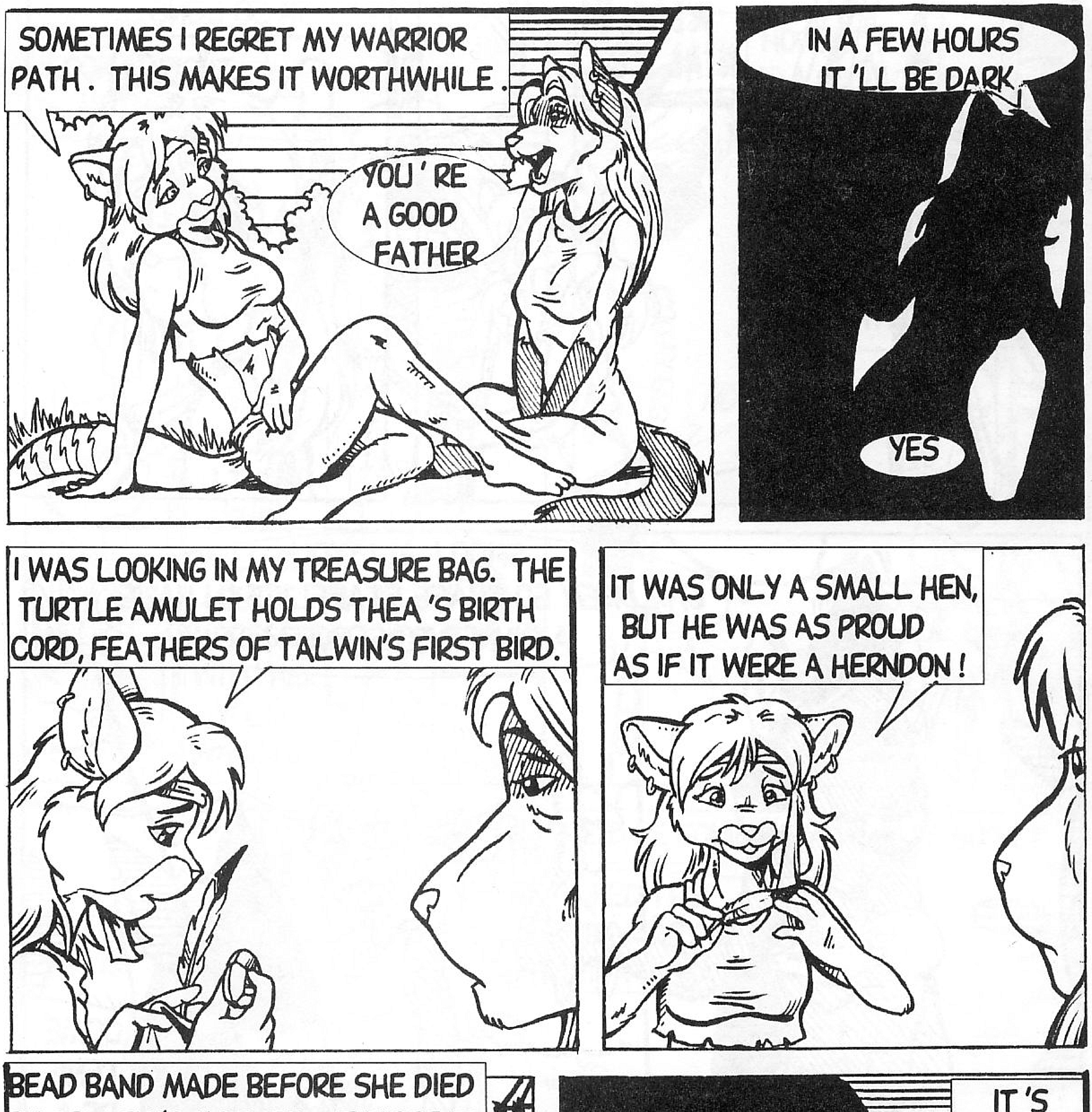

THWACK!
DARMIN, THAT IS A THROWING BLADE. I GOT IT IN TRADE A *LONG* WAY FROM HERE.
WOW
HESTA, WHY USE A WEAPON LIKE THAT? YOU'VE GOT CLAWS, A KNIFE, AN' YOU'RE **BIGGER** THAN ANYONE ELSE IN **OUR** TRIBE.
GIVES ME A LONGER REACH. DON'T FORGET, FOR HOPLITES, I'M AVERAGE HEIGHT.
OH!


FENNEL SEED . . .
MUSTARD POWDER . . .
SALT. . .
HOW'S YOUR MEAL DOING , LITTLE ONE?
IT NEEDS TO SIMMER AWHILE, MOTHER .
GOOD. LET'S TAKE A WALK.
QUIET. . WAIT 'TIL HE'S BELOW YOUR SPEAR .

AH ! SHE DIDN 'T TEACH ME TO FISH.
YOU DIDN 'T ASK
WHEN DID YOU KNOW THAT YOU WERE IN LOVE WITH MOTHER ?
I KNEW THE MINUTE I SAW LISKA . . .
THE TENT FLAP PULLED BACK . WE HAD BEEN GAMBLED AWAY. THERE STOOD OUR NEW MASTER. MY HAND TO MY HEART, STRUCK DUMB BY THE HANDSOME WARRIOR . . .

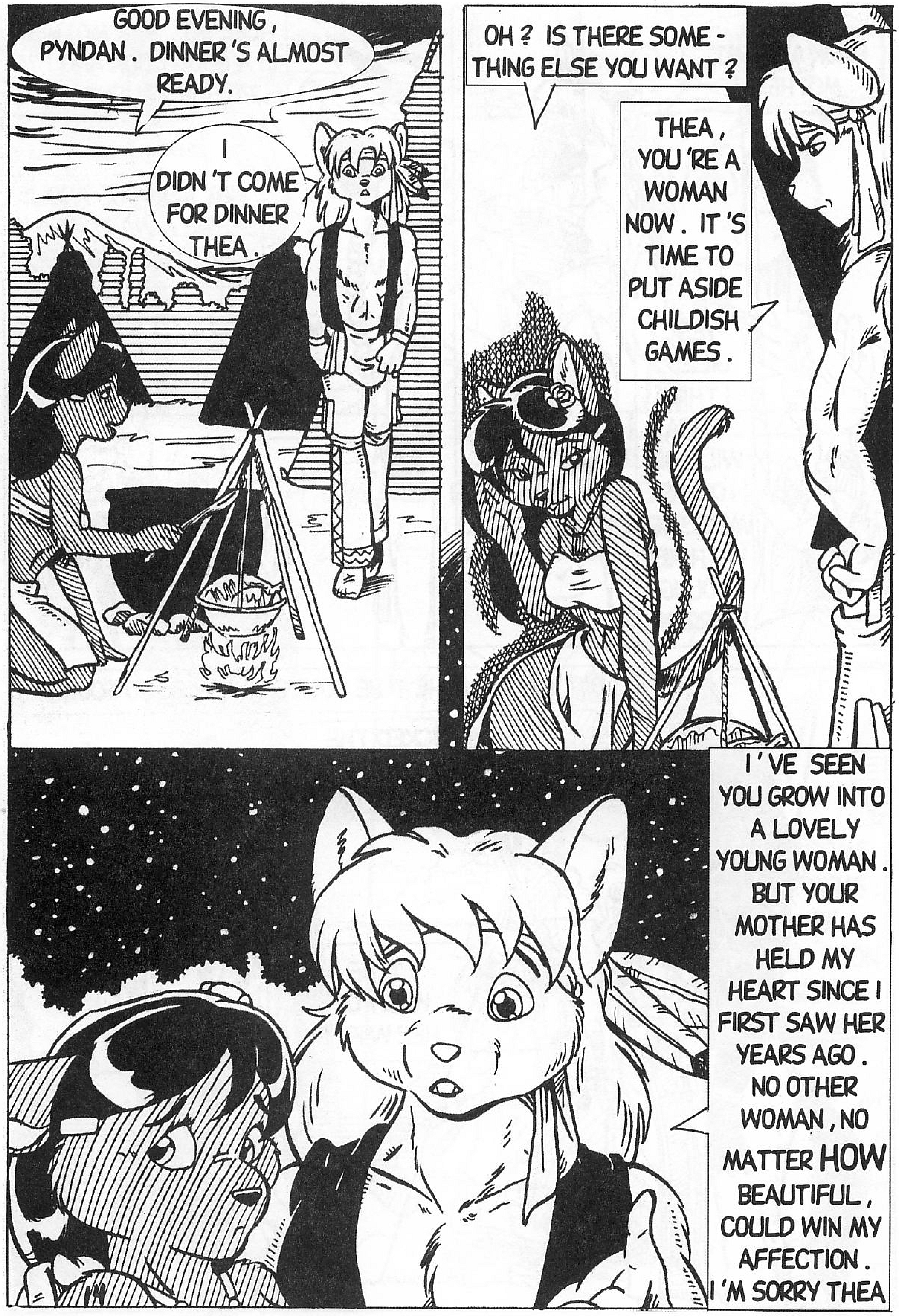

...I DIDN'T KNOW SHE WAS A WOMAN.
YOU DIDN'T?
NOT AT FIRST. THE SUN WAS BEHIND HER. I SAW A SLIM WARRIOR.
OH!
SHE CAME INSIDE THE TENT AND I KNEW. -- BUT MY HEART WAS HERS ALREADY.
WE WERE HER SLAVES FOR TWO YEARS. SONNA SLEPT WITH ELISHAA, AND I...
UH HUH?
...WARMED HER FURS AT NIGHT. SHE LOVED MY COOKING --
WHEN DID SHE ASK ME TO WED? I ASKED HER! SHE TOOK ME AS WIFE, RESCUED RIAL, A LITTLE DARK-FURRED KITTEN HAD APPEARED. I HAD A LITTLE GIRL TO..
...PLAY WITH AND TICKLE!
MOTHER!

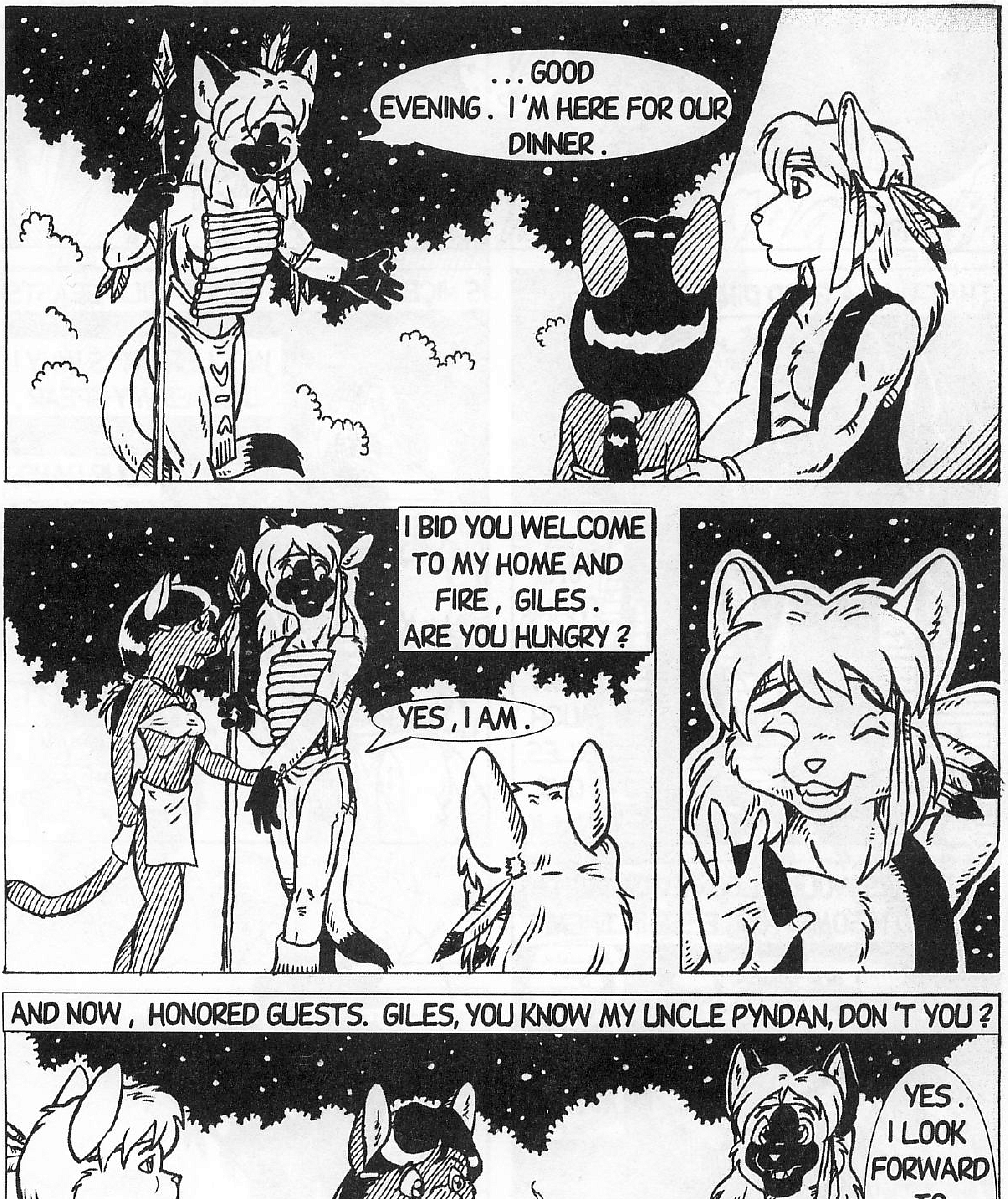

MOTHER SONNA ! DADDY AND I CAUGHT A FISH !
WHAT A BIG ONE !
PUT IT OVER THERE , AND GET DARMIN . HE 'S PRACTICING WITH HESTA . HE'LL SHOW YOU HOW TO CLEAN IT.
CAN I TELL HIM I 'M A BETTER HUNTER 'N HIM ?
YES , TODAY YOU CAN .

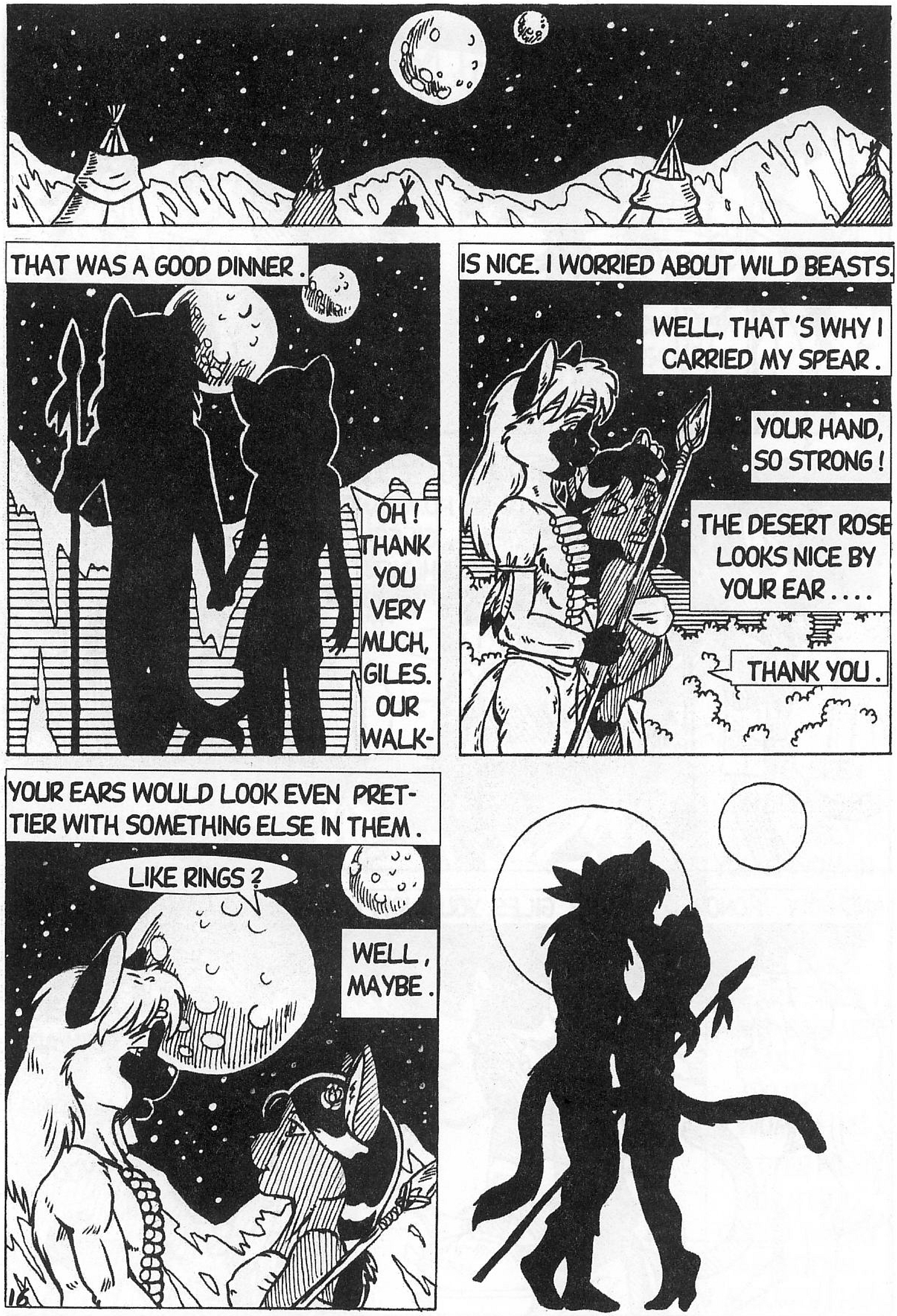

SOMETIMES I REGRET MY WARRIOR PATH. THIS MAKES IT WORTHWHILE.
YOU'RE A GOOD FATHER
IN A FEW HOURS IT'LL BE DARK.
YES
I WAS LOOKING IN MY TREASURE BAG. THE TURTLE AMULET HOLDS THEA'S BIRTH CORD, FEATHERS OF TALWIN'S FIRST BIRD.
IT WAS ONLY A SMALL HEN, BUT HE WAS AS PROUD AS IF IT WERE A HERNDON!
BEAD BAND MADE BEFORE SHE DIED BY PELLEW'S MOTHER. HE WORE IT 'TIL HE WON HIS WARRIOR'S SASH.
DARMIN, MELA...
IT'S TIME TO SAY GOODBYE TO THE PAST .... AS I HAD TO SAY GOODBYE TO RIAL.

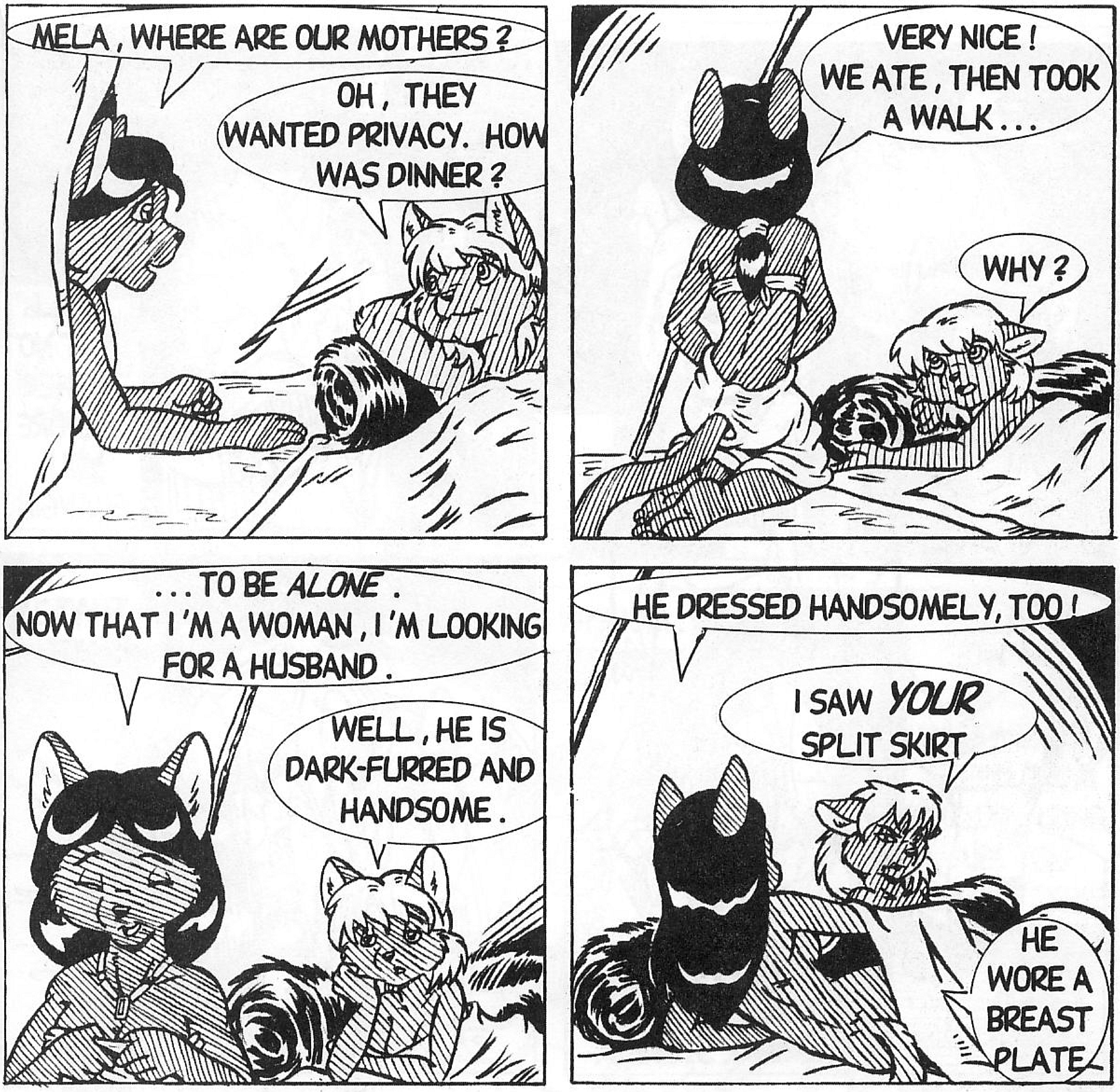
RIAL ?!
RIAL . . . .
SHE HASN'T SAID THAT IN SO LONG ---
SHOO ! ALL YOU *CHILDREN* GO CHASE STARFLIES ! I HAVE A DINNER TO SERVE ! !
COME ON KITTENS . --- I'LL BE A WOMAN SOON SISTER !

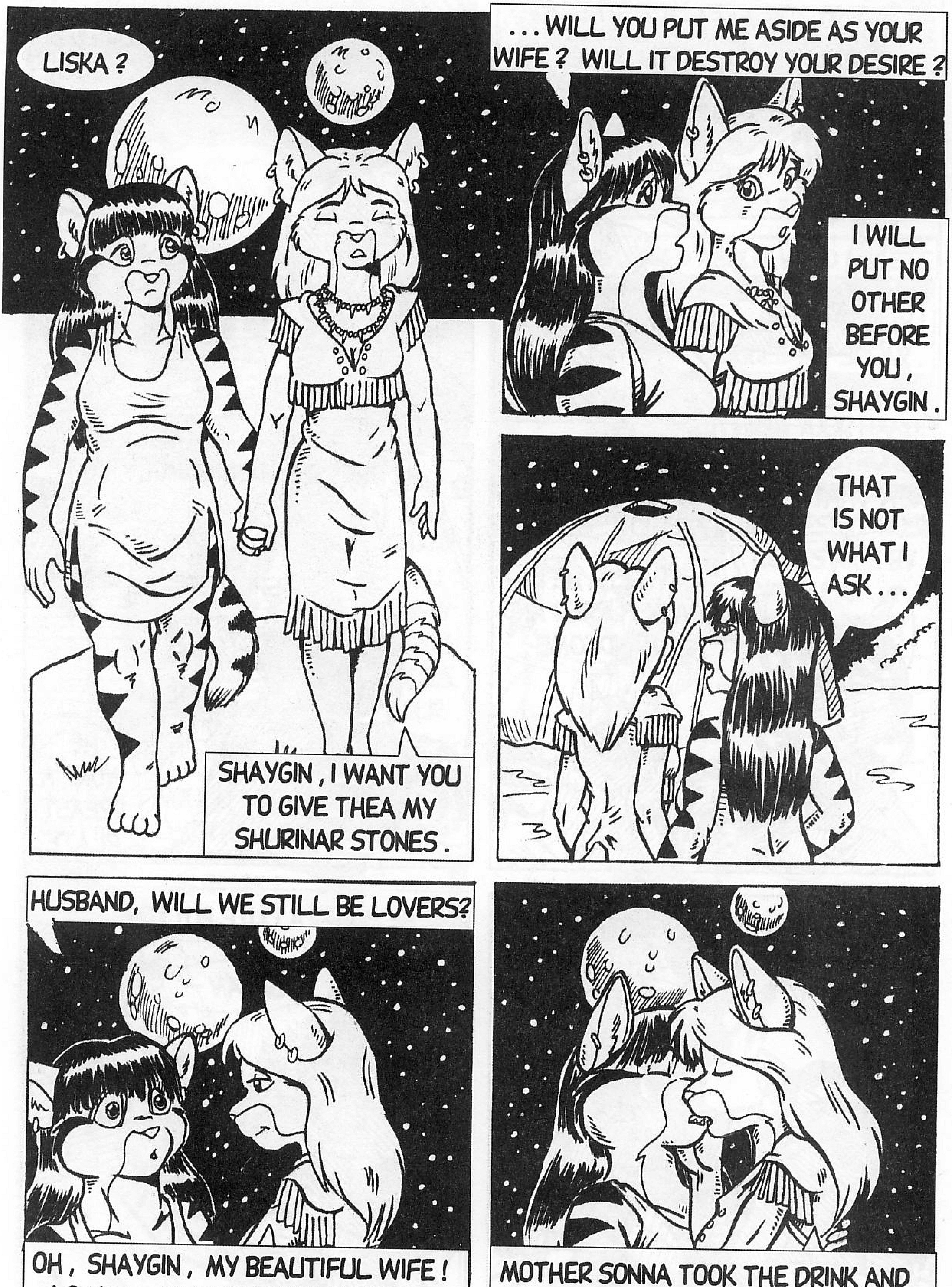
DO I LOOK ALRIGHT, MOTHER ?
YES, GILES. I THINK THEA WILL BE QUITE IMPRESSED WITH HER YOUNG WARRIOR.
HOPE SO. HER MOTHER IS A GOOD COOK AND I 'M SURE SHE TAUGHT THEA.
NOT NERVOUS ABOUT SEEING A WAR CHIEF 'S DAUGHTER, ARE YOU ?
NO, MOTHER !!
... DID YOU THINK HE 'D BE COURTING A WIFE SO SOON ?
HE PICKED THE RIGHT GIRL. *I 'D* BE WARY OF PICKING A FIGHT WITH LISKA.
I 'D BE WARY OF HER WIFE !


GOOD EVENING, PYNDAN. DINNER'S ALMOST READY.
I DIDN'T COME FOR DINNER THEA.
OH? IS THERE SOMETHING ELSE YOU WANT?
THEA, YOU'RE A WOMAN NOW. IT'S TIME TO PUT ASIDE CHILDISH GAMES.
I'VE SEEN YOU GROW INTO A LOVELY YOUNG WOMAN. BUT YOUR MOTHER HAS HELD MY HEART SINCE I FIRST SAW HER YEARS AGO. NO OTHER WOMAN, NO MATTER **HOW** BEAUTIFUL, COULD WIN MY AFFECTION. I'M SORRY THEA


...GOOD EVENING. I'M HERE FOR OUR DINNER.
I BID YOU WELCOME TO MY HOME AND FIRE, GILES. ARE YOU HUNGRY?
YES, I AM.
AND NOW, HONORED GUESTS. GILES, YOU KNOW MY UNCLE PYNDAN, DON'T YOU?
YES. I LOOK FORWARD TO HUNTING WITH YOU.


THAT WAS A GOOD DINNER.
OH! THANK YOU VERY MUCH, GILES. OUR WALK-
IS NICE. I WORRIED ABOUT WILD BEASTS.
WELL, THAT'S WHY I CARRIED MY SPEAR.
YOUR HAND, SO STRONG!
THE DESERT ROSE LOOKS NICE BY YOUR EAR....
THANK YOU.
YOUR EARS WOULD LOOK EVEN PRETTIER WITH SOMETHING ELSE IN THEM.
LIKE RINGS?
WELL, MAYBE.


MELA, WHERE ARE OUR MOTHERS?
OH, THEY WANTED PRIVACY. HOW WAS DINNER?
VERY NICE! WE ATE, THEN TOOK A WALK...
WHY?
...TO BE *ALONE*. NOW THAT I'M A WOMAN, I'M LOOKING FOR A HUSBAND.
WELL, HE IS DARK-FURRED AND HANDSOME.
HE DRESSED HANDSOMELY, TOO!
I SAW *YOUR* SPLIT SKIRT
HE WORE A BREAST PLATE
..BUT I LIKED HIS LOINCLOTH BEST!
THAT? WHY?
HE'S GOT A CUTE BOTTOM....
GROAN--


LISKA ?
SHAYGIN, I WANT YOU TO GIVE THEA MY SHURINAR STONES.
... WILL YOU PUT ME ASIDE AS YOUR WIFE ? WILL IT DESTROY YOUR DESIRE ?
I WILL PUT NO OTHER BEFORE YOU, SHAYGIN.
THAT IS NOT WHAT I ASK...
HUSBAND, WILL WE STILL BE LOVERS?
OH, SHAYGIN, MY BEAUTIFUL WIFE! I SHALL *ALWAYS* DESIRE YOU!
MOTHER SONNA TOOK THE DRINK AND HAS LOVERS. WAIT FOR ME, TREASURE.

— ENTER, WOMAN, OF YOUR OWN FREE WILL....
LEAVING FERTILITY, KEEPING WOMEN'S WISDOM.
YOU WILL JOIN THE COUNCIL OF WISEWOMEN, FREED FROM CHILDBEARING. ARE YOU READY? THIS
...TOO, IS A GIFT FROM THE GODDESS.
LAY WITH NO MAN FOR A MOON CYCLE. EACH NIGHT WE WILL INSTRUCT YOU. YOU HAVE MUCH TO LEARN.

NEXT DARK MOON YOU WILL DRINK ONE FINAL TIME, THEN YOU ARE ONE OF US.
THANK YOU, MY ELDER SISTERS.
MOTHER OF HEROES, WE HONOR PELOS TODAY WITH THE SWORD AND SUNBURST FOR BRAVERY. HE GAVE HIS LIFE SO THAT OTHERS MIGHT LIVE IN FREEDOM.
THANK YOU, COMMANDER. I AM PROUD THAT MY SON SERVED HIS FELLOW MAN, HIS DUTY, AND HIS OWN HONOR SO WELL.
NEXT – THE PEACEMAKER